

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ADDIS 04652 01 OF 02 011750Z
ACTION NODS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5066

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 4652

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, MASS, US, SO, ET
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER

REF: ADDIS ABABA 4629; ADDIS ABABA 4630

1. I WAS SUMMONED MORNING AUGUST 1 FOR MEETING WITH FONMIN FELLEKE GEDLE-GHIORGIS (REFTELS). FELLEKE APOLOGIZED FOR ABORTED MEETING SUNDAY AND SAID HE WAS SEEKING CLARIFICATION REGARDING REASONS FOR, AND FURTHER DETAILS OF, US DECISION TO PROVIDE DEFENSIVE WEAPONS TO SOMALIA. HE STRESSED THAT DECISION WOULD NOT BE WELL RECEIVED BY ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE AND WOULD BE INCREASINGLY QUESTIONED AS SOMALI AGGRESSION CONTINUES. US SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT EPMG HAS ONE BASIC GOAL--TO TRY TO BRING JUSTICE TO A SOCIETY WHERE NO JUSTICE HAD PREVAILED BEFORE, TO IMPROVE LIVING STANDARDS OF THOSE PERSONS DENIED THEIR RIGHTS IN PAST. UNITY OF COUNTRY IS ESSENTIAL TO CARRY OUT THIS PURPOSE. AT SAME TIME ETHIOPIA HAD NO AGGRESSIVE INTENT AGAINST ANY OF ITS NEIGHBORS AND WAS SIMPLY TRYING TO REESTABLISH PEACEFUL CONDITIONS WITHIN ITS OWN BOUNDARIES.

2. FELLEKE CONTINUED THAT EPMG HAD TRIED PN PAST TIME AND AGAIN TO CONVINCE EMBASSY AND US GOVT. THAT AGGRES-

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SION WAS BEING PREPARED. SOMALI PREPARATIONS OVER PAST TEN YEARS IN THIS REGARD WERE SIMPLY NOT TAKEN COGNIZANCE OF. HAVING FAILED TO CONVINCE US THAT SOMALIA WAS GOING TO ATTACK ETHIOPIA, EPMG HAD BEEN FORCED TO FIND OTHER SOURCES FOR OBTAINING MEANS TO DEFEND ITSELF AND TO PREPARE FOR THIS AGGRESSION.

3. FELLEKE RECALLED THAT AS RESULT CHARGE MEETING WITH MENGISTU, LATTER HAD BEEN GIVEN TO BELIEVE THAT SOME RESIDUAL US MILITARY ITEMS WOULD BE DELIVERED. THIS HAD NOT YET BEEN CARRIED OUT, TITLE DEEDS HAVE BEEN IGNORED, AND NO MATERIALS HAD BEEN RECEIVED AS YET. NEVERTHELESS, EPMG CONVINCED THAT US STILL INTENDS TO SEND REMAINING THREE PATROL BOATS AND OTHER ITEMS. IF IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO EXPEDITE MATTER, EPMG WAS PREPARED TO SEND DELEGATION TO WASHINGTON TO DISCUSS THIS AND OTHER MATTERS.

4. RETURNING TO OGADEN, FELLEKE POINTED OUT THAT CONFLICT WAS ALSO RELIGIOUS IN NATURE. SOMALI BOMBING RAIDS AGAINST ETHIOPIAN TOWNS OF AWAREH AND DEGEHABUR OVER WEEKEND HAD RESULTED IN MUTILATION AND DEATH OF MANY WOMEN, CHILDREN, AND ELDERLY PERSONS. COMING AT SUCH A TIME, US DECISION HAD CAUSED GREAT SURPRISE AND DISAPPOINTMENT. HE REPEATED THAT ETHIOPIANS WOULD NEVER FORGET US DECISION TO SUPPORT SOMALIA DURING VERY MOMENT WHEN SOMALIA WAS INVADING ETHIOPIA. THEY REMEMBERED HOW CLOSELY ETHIOPIA AND US HAD WORKED TOGETHER FOR SO MANY YEARS, HOW TWO PEOPLES HAD FOUGHT SIDE BY SIDE IN KOREA. MENGISTU HIMSELF HAD EMPHASIZED TO CHARGE THAT EXPULSION ACTIONS AGAINST US OFFICIAL PERSONNEL SHOULD NOT BE VIEWED AS HAVING FUNDAMENTAL EFFECT UPON LONGSTANDING BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. CONFIDENTIAL

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UNFORTUNATELY, COMMITMENTS HAD NOT ALWAYS BEEN CARRIED OUT IN PAST, AND MEASURES HAD BEEN TAKEN THAT HAD FORCED EPMG INTO CERTAIN ACTIONS TO PRESERVE ITS OWN INTERESTS. US SHOULD KEEP TRADITIONAL TIES IN MIND. SOMALI ARMS DECISION APPEARED INTOLERABLE IN THAT CONTEXT. HENCE, FELLEKE CALLED THIS MEETING TO LEARN OFFICIAL EXPLANATION.

5. IN REPLY, I REFERRED TO PRESS GUIDANCE PREPARED AS PUBLIC EXPLANATION OF OUR DECISION, COPY OF WHICH HAD BEEN GIVEN TO MOFA LAST WEEK, WITH WHICH FELLEKE WAS FAMILIAR (STATE 175545). I NOTED THAT GSDR HAD APPROACHED US AND OTHER COUNTRIES FOR ASSISTANCE, AND THAT IN RESPONSE TO THAT REQUEST WE HAD INDICATED OUR WILLINGNESS IN PRINCIPLE TO PROVIDE ARMS FOR DEFENSIVE PURPOSES FOR USE WITHIN SOMALIA'S OWN TERRITORY IN FILLING GAPS IN ITS EXISTING DEFENSIVE ARSENAL. TO DATE, NO ITEMS HAD BEEN APPROVED, NO DELIVERY DATES ESTABLISHED. LIKEWISE, NO MILITARY ASSISTANCE GRANTS WOULD BE INVOLVED. US HAD NO WISH TO BECOME EMBROILED IN DISPUTES OVER OGADEN AND TOOK POSITION THAT DISPUTE SHOULD BE RESOLVED BY PARTIES DIRECTLY CONCERNED.

I QUOTED PRESS GUIDANCE STATEMENT IN FAVOR OF TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND ALSO QUOTED SECRETARY VANCE JULY 29 PRESS STATEMENT OF EFFECT THAT IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION WHETHER US WOULD INSIST THAT US WEAPONS NOT BE USED IN ETHIOPIAN TERRITORY OF OGADEN, HE REPLIED, QUOTE WE HAVE MADE NO DECISION YET TO SUPPLY ANY ARMS, AND IF WE WERE TO DO SO, THAT WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE ONE OF CONDITIONS WHICH WOULD ACCOMPANY FURNISHING OF SUCH ARMS. UNQUOTE. (WIRELESS FILE 147, JULY 29).

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ACTION NODS-00

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 4652

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6. ON OTHER POINTS RAISED, I SAID THAT AFTER MY CONVERSATION WITH MOFA PERSEC DAWIT JULY 6, I PRESUMED THAT EPMG HAD CONTACTED ITS FREIGHT FORWARDER IN US TO ARRANGE FOR ONWARD SHIPMENT OF REMAINING MILITARY ITEMS TO WHICH EPMG HAD TITLE. AS FOR PATROL BOATS, ALTHOUGH THIS WAS STRICTLY COMMERCIAL TRANSACTION, WE COULD INQUIRE WITH SWIFT SHIPS. STATUS REPORT FROM ETHIOPIAN MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE ON ALL THESE ITEMS WOULD BE HELPFUL, HOWEVER, IF EMBASSY IS TO MAKE INQUIRIES. SINCE, AS I HAD EXPLAINED TO DAWIT, OVERALL MILITARY RELATIONSHIP WAS NOW TERMINATED, DELIVERY OF ALL OTHER ITEMS IN PIPELINE ON WHICH TITLE HAD NOT CHANGED HANDS WAS NO LONGER BEING CONSIDERED. FELLEKE ASKED WHETHER THIS INCLUDED REMAINING EIGHT F-5E FIGHTER PLANES. I EXPLAINED AGAIN THAT SUCH ITEMS, WHICH HAD BEEN PAID FOR IN PART, WOULD NOT BE DELIVERED, WITH FINANCIAL SETTLEMENT TO BE DISCUSSED IN CONTEXT OF MORE GENERAL ISSUE OF OUTSTANDING CLAIMS BETWEEN TWO GOVERNMENTS.

7. I POINTED OUT AT SOME LENGTH THAT UNTIL EARLY THIS YEAR, US HAD CAREFULLY HONORED ALL ITS COMMITMENTS TO

EPMG AND HAD NEVER TAKEN POSITION INTERFERING WITH ETHIOPIAN INTERNAL AFFAIRS. OUR VIEW WAS THAT IT IS ETHIOPIA'S REVOLUTION, NOT OURS. US HAD MAINTAINED CONFIDENTIAL

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ITS AID PROGRAM IN LINE WITH EPMG DESIRE TO HELP LESS PRIVILEGED. OUR ATTITUDE ON THIS AND OTHER ASPECTS OF BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP HAD BEEN SAME BOTH BEFORE AND AFTER REVOLUTION, SINCE MANY OF SOCIAL MEASURES IMPLEMENTED IN WAKE OF REVOLUTION WERE ONES WE APPLAUDED AND COULD AGREE WITH. UNTIL PROBLEMS OF LAST SPRING, US HAD ALSO CONTINUED ITS DELIVERIES OF MILITARY ITEMS, INCLUDING MANY REQUESTS PLACED SINCE REVOLUTION.

8. AS FOR ADVISABILITY OF SENDING DELEGATION TO WASHINGTON, I SAID THAT IF PURPOSE WAS SOLELY TO DISCUSS OUTSTANDING ISSUES RELATING TO FORMER MILITARY RELATIONSHIP, IT WAS MY PERSONAL OPINION THAT SUCH A DELEGATION'S VISIT WOULD NOT BE PARTICULARLY HELPFUL, ALTHOUGH I WAS OF COURSE PREPARED TO RAISE POSSIBILITY WITH WASHINGTON. ON OTHER HAND, IF MINISTER'S REFERENCE TO "OTHER ISSUES" RELATED TO MORE GENERAL QUESTIONS CONCERNING OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP, (AND FELLEKE INDICATED THAT THIS WAS INDEED THE FACT), THIS WAS ENTIRELY DIFFERENT PROPOSITION. OF COURSE, IT WAS FOR EPMG TO DECIDE IN FIRST INSTANCE WHETHER SUCH A VISIT WOULD BE HELPFUL, BUT I THOUGHT THAT THERE WOULD BE THOSE IN OUR GOVERNMENT WHO WOULD BE INTERESTED IN WHAT DELEGATION HAD TO SAY. IN ANY EVENT, I AGREED TO ASCERTAIN DEPARTMENT REACTION TO PROPOSAL.

9. FELLEKE CLOSED MEETING BY PROMISING TO OBTAIN FROM MOND INDICATION OF CURRENT STATUS ON MILITARY ITEMS RELEASED BY US FOR DELIVERY TO ETHIOPIA. TONE OF ENTIRE MEETING WAS MODERATE AND ALMOST GENTLE. REGISTRY OF DISSATISFACTION OVER US DECISION ON SOMALI ARMS WAS CLEAR, BUT ENVELOPED IN BROADER CONFIDENTIAL

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TEXT OF REGRET THAT BILATERAL RELATIONS HAD GOTTEN OFF TRACK SOMEHOW. FELLEKE, BERHANU DINKA AND BERHANE DERESSA, DIRECTOR OF AFRICAN AND AMERICAN DIVISION, MOFA, APPEARED TO ACCEPT ALL OF MY COMMENTS, INCLUDING CLASSIFICATION, OR AT LEAST CHOSE NOT TO QUESTION THEM FURTHER.

10. PETER ONU, ASSISTANT SEC GEN, OAU, FOLLOWED ME IN,
WE UNDERSTAND ON SAME GENERAL SUBJECT. BRITISH
CHARGE WAS SUMMONED FOR 1600 LOCAL THIS AFTERNOON BUT
ARRIVED AT MOFA TO FIND THAT MEETING HAD AGAIN BEEN
POSTPONED.

11. COMMENTS BY SEPTTEL.
TIENKEN

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